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Letter dated 30 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

As you are aware, the South African delegation at the recent meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001, announced that the South African Police Service (SAPS) destroyed 102 tons of small arms, parts of small arms and spares, worth an estimated US$ 3.5 million on 17 January 2001. This initiative to unilaterally destroy surplus small arms is an example of a practical measure to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade and small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

It would therefore be appreciated if the South African statement (see annex) could be circulated as a document of the Preparatory Committee.

(*Signed*) Dumisani S. **Kumalo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2001 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

United Nations, New York, 19 January 2001: Statement by South Africa at the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

In view of the importance of the destruction of surplus and redundant stocks of small arms and light weapons as a key preventative measure to stop the proliferation of small arms, the South African Government took another significant step to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) destroyed 102 tons of small arms, parts of small arms and spares, worth an estimated US$ 3.5 million on 17 January 2001. A total of 27,816 small arms, such as pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns and home-made arms, were destroyed. The arms destroyed in this batch, included 4,524 confiscated and home-made arms as well as 23,292 redundant police arms. Seven (7) launchers and 20,335 parts of arms and spares were also destroyed.

In terms of South African policy, small arms confiscated by the Police Service are destroyed after the completion of criminal investigation processes, which include forensic testing.

The Government of South Africa is committed to combating the flow of illegal arms across our borders and many successes have been reported. During the past number of years thousands of small arms, light weapons and ammunition have been destroyed in Mozambique in different phases of Operation Rachel. More than 12,100 weapons and nearly 104,000 rounds of ammunition have been confiscated since March 2000 in Operation Crackdown. In most cases, the serial numbers on these weapons were removed, which make it difficult or impossible to trace the original owner or manufacturer.

South Africa trusts that its initiative to unilaterally destroy all surplus small arms will serve as an example of a practical measure to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade and small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.